Book 1 – Chapter 1

Concerning the Purpose and Outcome of the Death of Christ, as Declared in Holy Scripture

When we speak of the end of Christ's death, we mean, in general, two things:

First, the purpose which both the Father and the Son had in mind when He died; and
Second, what His death actually accomplished and brought to pass.

To understand both, we need only consider how the Holy Ghost speaks of it in the Scriptures.

I. The Purpose and Intention of Christ's Coming and Dying

If you would know why Christ came into the world, and with what intention, we need only ask Himself. Who better to explain His purpose than He who knew the mind of the Father and shared all the secrets of heaven?

He tells us plainly,

> "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost" (Matthew 18:11).
> And again,
> "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

The apostles, who were taught by Him, say the same. As Paul puts it:

> "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Now, if you ask who these sinners are toward whom Christ had this merciful intention, He tells us:

> "The Son of man came… to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

In other passages, those "many" are identified as believers, set apart from the world. Paul writes:

"[He] gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father" (Galatians 1:4).

This was the Father's will—that Christ should give Himself for us, to rescue us from this evil world.

They are referred to as His church, as in Ephesians 5:25–27:

"Christ… loved the church, and gave himself for it;
that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,
that he might present it to himself a glorious church,
not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Likewise in Titus 2:14:

"Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,
and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

So then, the Scriptures clearly declare the intention of Christ and His Father in this mighty work:
To save us,
To deliver us from this evil world,
To purge and cleanse us,
To make us holy,
To make us zealous and fruitful in good works,
To render us acceptable to God, and to bring us to Him.

As Paul writes,

"By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand" (Romans 5:2).

II. The Effects and Actual Accomplishments of Christ's Death

What, then, did the death of Christ actually achieve? What was truly wrought by His death, His shedding of blood, His offering?

Let the Scriptures tell us:

1. Reconciliation with God:
Christ removed the enmity between us and God.

"When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son" (Romans 5:10).
"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (2 Corinthians 5:19).
"He hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ" (v.18).

How did He do this? Paul explains:

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity… to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace;
and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Ephesians 2:15–16).
Thus,
"He is our peace" (Ephesians 2:14).

2. Justification:
Christ removed the guilt of our sins and obtained pardon and forgiveness:

"By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:12).
"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13).
"Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

Paul declares:

"All have sinned… but [we are] justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood…" (Romans 3:23–25).

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins" (Colossians 1:14).

3. Sanctification:
His blood cleanses us and renews us in the image of God.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ… purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14).

"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).
"When he had by himself purged our sins…" (Hebrews 1:3).
"That he might sanctify the people with his own blood" (Hebrews 13:12).

He gave Himself for the church:

"To sanctify and cleanse it… that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25–27).

Amongst the graces of the Spirit, it is said:

"Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ… to believe on him" (Philippians 1:29).
God "hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephesians 1:3).

4. Adoption:
Through Christ's death we are made the children of God and enjoy the liberty of sons:

"God sent forth his Son… to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4–5).

5. Eternal Glory:
The blessings of Christ's death do not cease in this life—they carry us into eternal life.

We are sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession (Ephesians 1:13–14).
"He is the mediator of the new testament… that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:15).

The sum of the matter is this:
The death and blood-shedding of Christ has truly and effectually secured for all whom it concerns an eternal redemption, including grace now and glory hereafter.

III. The Modern Error: A General Ransom?

Given how plain and powerful these Scriptures are, one would think no man could miss the truth. Yet strangely, nothing is more disputed in the Christian faith than this foundational point.

There is a common teaching now, widely spread, which claims that Christ died for everyone—that He offered a general ransom for all mankind, not just for the church, or the elect of God.

But if what the Scriptures say is true—if Christ's death actually achieves all these things—then one of two things must follow:

Either: God and Christ failed in what they set out to do.
That is, they intended to save all, but did not succeed. The means (Christ's death) was not sufficient to accomplish the end.
But to say such a thing is blasphemous—a slander against God's wisdom and power, and an insult to the precious value of Christ's death.

Or,

All mankind—every last son of Adam—must be saved, sanctified, and glorified.
But no one truly believes that. The Scriptures and our own experience tell us plainly that many perish.

Therefore, to support their claim, the defenders of this general ransom must deny that God or Christ had any definite purpose or certain effect in Christ's death.
They claim nothing definite was purchased or secured by it—only that a general possibility of salvation is offered to all.
They say no soul benefits immediately from Christ's death, unless he believes—but that this faith is not itself secured or purchased by Christ.

But if Christ purchased faith, why do not all believe?

This doctrine, to my mind, weakens the power and value of Christ's death. It undermines the comfort of believers and rests upon a dangerous and unscriptural foundation.

With the Lord's help, I shall proceed to show what the Scriptures truly teach—both the correct doctrine, and the errors brought against it—trusting that the Lord will grant us His Spirit to lead us into truth and give us understanding in all things.

"And if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you" (Philippians 3:15).

Book 1 – Chapter 2

On the Nature of an End in General, and Some Distinctions Concerning It

I. What Do We Mean by an "End"?

The end of any action is the goal or purpose which the one acting has in mind to achieve through it. It is that which someone aims at, desires, and sees as good or worthwhile within their current condition.

For example, when Noah built the ark, his intention was to preserve life—his own and his family's—according to the will of God. As the Scripture says:

"Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he" (Genesis 6:22).

That which a person does in order to reach their intended goal is called the means. These two—end and means—make up the entire reason why a rational being does anything at all. I am here speaking only of intelligent and voluntary agents, who act by choice.

Take Absalom, for instance: when he desired to rebel against his father and seize the crown, he prepared chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him (2 Samuel 15:1). By smooth talk and flattery,

"he stole the hearts of the men of Israel" (v.6).

Then, using religion as a cover, he staged a false sacrifice in Hebron and formed a conspiracy (v.12).

All these were the means by which he pursued his end—namely, the kingdom.

II. The Relationship Between End and Means

There's a clear relationship between ends and means. Though different in nature, they are causes of one another.

The end is what first stirs a man to action—it is the primary cause of all his planning. No one acts without an end in view. Without it, they would have no reason to do this rather than that.

The people after the flood, seeking unity and safety, decided:

"Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4).

Their desire (the end) led them to choose a course of action (the means).

So, in all rational planning, the end comes first in thought, even if it comes last in time.

Means, then, are everything used to reach that goal—e.g. eating to preserve life, sailing to cross the sea, laws to keep society orderly. These means are in some way the cause of the end.

The end exists for their sake, and is brought about through them, either morally or naturally.

Morally, the means are the deserving or meritorious cause.

For instance, if Adam had remained obedient, his reward (the end) would have been eternal life.

But now, sin brings death, the curse of the law.

Naturally, the means are the efficient cause.

If a man kills another, as Joab did to Abner,

"he smote him... that he died" (2 Samuel 3:27).

Or if Benaiah killed Shimei by Solomon's command (1 Kings 2:46), it was the wounds that caused death.

Now, in purely physical terms, there's no difference between murder and execution. But under a moral lens, one deserves punishment, the other brings justice. There's a great gulf fixed—chasma megas, as the Greeks would say—between the two.

III. The End of the Work vs. The End of the Workman

Sometimes there is a difference between the end of the act itself and the intention of the person acting. This happens because we, as fallen men, are prone to mistakes and misjudgement.

When a man uses means that are unsuitable to reach his goal, he may aim at one thing, but end up with quite another.

Take Adam again. He desired to be like God—that was his end. But the means he used was eating the forbidden fruit. The outcome? Guilt, not glory.

However, when a person acts rightly—when their goal is proper and the means are fit—then the end of the work and the end of the workman are the same.

For example, when Abel sought to worship the Lord,

"he offered… a more excellent sacrifice than Cain… and by it he obtained witness that he was righteous" (Hebrews 11:4).

Or when a sinner desires salvation in Christ, he seeks Him rightly and uses the ordained means—faith and repentance.

Now, this difference only arises because men are secondary agents, with their actions governed by an external law or rule. They are accountable to God and cannot escape His judgment.

But God, who is the First Cause, has no such limitation. His will is the rule. Every action He takes is perfectly aligned with His intended end. He never misses the mark.

IV. Two Kinds of Ends

When a free agent acts, his purpose may be:

The thing he actually brings to pass (the effect), or

The reason why he does it (his motive or higher end).

For example:

A man builds a house to rent out. His immediate end is the house; his ultimate motive is to earn money.

A physician heals his patient. The result is health, but the motivation might be payment.

Judas betrayed the Lord. His actions—bargaining with the priests, leading the soldiers, kissing Christ—had the effect of betrayal. But his motive was gain:

"What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?" (Matthew 26:15).

As for God, the effect of Christ's death was the satisfaction of His justice.
But His highest motive was His own glory.
His secondary motive, under that, was the salvation of His elect.

V. Two Types of Means

Means may be of two sorts:

Good in themselves, even apart from their usefulness.
For example, study is a noble activity of the mind. But when we pursue it for wisdom, it is no longer seen as good in itself, but good as a means. Otherwise, it is but

"a weariness of the flesh" (Ecclesiastes 12:12).

Good only as means, not in themselves.
These are unpleasant or painful things we endure for the sake of a greater good.
Think of:

Cutting off a limb to save a life,

Taking a bitter medicine to restore health,

Throwing cargo overboard to prevent shipwreck.

In this second category, we place the death of Christ. In itself, a cruel and violent thing—yet as a means of redemption, it is precious beyond all.

We shall speak more of this in due course.
VI. Applying These Truths to Redemption

Having now laid out these general principles, we can begin to apply them to the great work of our redemption.

We must carefully consider:

The Agent – who acts in redemption,

The Means – by which it is accomplished,

The End – what is brought about by it.

These three must be treated in order and in distinction, so that we may rightly understand the fullness of this glorious work.

Book 1 – Chapter 3

On the Agent or Chief Author of the Work of Our Redemption, and the First Distinct Act Ascribed to the Father
I. The Chief Agent in Our Redemption

The great work of our redemption is the work of the blessed Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Every outward act of the Godhead is undivided; it belongs equally to all three Persons, even though each Person acts according to His own distinct way of existence and order.

Now, it's true that many instrumental causes were involved in Christ's sufferings (or His passion), but none of these can rightly be called the cause of our redemption.

From the standpoint of God's purpose, even those who conspired against Christ simply fulfilled

"whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28).

From Christ's standpoint, no man took His life from Him:

"I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:17–18).

So then, all other agents are set aside.

Within the Trinity, though all act as one in the work of redemption, Scripture assigns certain acts particularly to each Person, and we, in our weak understanding, must consider them separately.

We begin, then, with the acts especially attributed to the Father.

II. Two Main Acts Ascribed to the Father

There are two key actions of the Father in the work of redemption by the blood of Christ:

He sent His Son into the world for this very purpose.

He laid the punishment for our sins upon Him.

1. The Father Sends the Son

God the Father loved the world and sent His Son to redeem it:

"God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved" (John 3:17).

"God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3).

"Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood" (Romans 3:25).

"But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son… to redeem them that were under the law" (Galatians 4:4–5).

This "sending" of the Son is mentioned more than twenty times in John's Gospel. Christ Himself refers to "Him whom the Father hath sent" (John 10:36), and the Father is called "He who sent me" (John 5:37).

Indeed, this act of sending belongs to the Father:

"And he shall send them a Saviour, and a great one, and he shall deliver them" (Isaiah 19:20).
"And now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me" (Isaiah 48:16).

That's why the Father is also called our Saviour, as in:

"According to the commandment of God our Saviour" (1 Timothy 1:1; cf. Titus 1:3).
"My spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour" (Luke 1:47).

Even in 1 Timothy 4:10,

"We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe,"
this title refers not only to redemption, but to God's providence and preservation over all.

This sending includes three distinct actions, which we now explain in order.
(1) The Father's Authoritative Appointment

First, the Father appointed Christ to the office of Mediator. The Son willingly accepted this role, humbling Himself under the Father's will, even though He was "in the form of God" (Philippians 2:6–8).

This appointment has two parts:

[a] The Eternal Decree of God's Counsel
From all eternity, the Father set apart His Son for this work:

"Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance" (Psalm 2:7–8).
"The LORD hath sworn… Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek" (Psalm 110:4).
He appointed Him "heir of all things" (Hebrews 1:2) and "Judge of quick

and dead" (Acts 10:42).

"Foreordained before the foundation of the world" (1 Peter 1:20).

Though this is an eternal act, it rightly belongs here because Scripture often treats purpose and accomplishment together.

[b] Christ's Public Inauguration into Office

This includes:

God committing all judgment to the Son (John 5:22),

Declaring Him both "Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36),

Appointing Him "over his own house" (Hebrews 3:1–6),

And anointing Him as the "most Holy" (Daniel 9:24), with

"the oil of gladness above thy fellows" (Psalm 45:7).

This anointing parallels the setting apart of sacred objects like the ark and altar (Exodus 30:25–28).

It also includes:

The angelic proclamation of His birth (Luke 2:10–11),

The heavenly voice at His baptism (Matthew 3:17),

His glorification through resurrection and ascension (Hebrews 1:3, Psalm 2:6).

All these testify to His being publicly set apart as our Redeemer.

(2) The Father Furnishes the Son

The second act is the Father bestowing upon His Son all spiritual gifts and graces needed for His mission.

There were two kinds of fullness in Christ:

(a) The Natural Fullness of His Deity
Christ shares the divine nature:

"The glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14),
"Equal with God" (Philippians 2:6),
"The LORD of hosts" (Zechariah 13:7).
Isaiah saw His glory:
"Mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts" (Isaiah 6:5, John 12:41).

Though Christ humbled Himself and laid aside outward glory, this eternal deity remained untouched.

(b) The Communicated Fullness as Mediator

This is the fullness of grace given to Him by the Father to equip Him as the Mediator:

"In him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9),
"Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1:16),
"It pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell" (Colossians 1:19).

He was filled with the Spirit to preach the Gospel (Isaiah 61:1–2), to suffer, and to save.

"He received not the Spirit by measure" (John 3:34).

This grace flows from Him to all His people, as oil from the golden pipes into the candlestick (Zechariah 4:12).

(3) The Covenant Between the Father and the Son

The third act is the covenant between the Father and the Son, involving both support in the work and a promised outcome.

First, the Father promises to support and uphold the Son:

Though Christ would bear suffering, rejection, grief, and the wrath of God

(Isaiah 53), yet the Father promised to:

"Help him… uphold him… and justify him" (Isaiah 50:7–9).

This gave Christ confidence to endure:

"I set my face like a flint… I shall not be ashamed."

He committed Himself to His Father:

"When he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (1 Peter 2:23).

Secondly, the Father promises success:

The Son would surely accomplish what He came to do:

"To raise up the tribes of Jacob… a light to the Gentiles… my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isaiah 49:6).
"They shall not hunger nor thirst… they shall feed in the ways" (vv. 10–12).

This is the gathering of a glorious church, fed by the living waters of God in Christ.

This was the very purpose for which Christ came.

"He shall see his seed… the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand" (Isaiah 53:10).
"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied… by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many" (v.11).

Some have said that Christ could have died and none be saved—but this is flatly contradicted by the promises of God.

Christ's own prayer reflects this covenant:

"I have finished the work… Father, glorify me" (John 17:4–5).
"Sanctify them… that they all may be one… that they may behold my glory" (vv.17–24).

Note well:

"I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me" (v.9).

This is the true purpose of Christ's death:
The gathering and saving of His people—not a vague or general offer, but a definite redemption of the elect.

Book 1 – Chapter 4

Concerning Those Works in the Great Redemption That Are Properly Ascribed to the Person of the Son

I. The Son's Willing Undertaking

The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, was not forced into His work of redemption. Rather, He willingly took it upon Himself.

When God the Father made it known that sacrifices and burnt offerings would not suffice—

"Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not… in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure"—
then Christ said,
"Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:6–7).

All other means having failed, Christ took the task upon Himself, He "in whom the Father was well pleased" (Matthew 3:17).

He repeatedly declared:

"I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38).
"My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34).

Even as a boy, His first recorded words were:

"Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49).

And at the close of His ministry:

"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (John 17:4).

This speaks directly to the charge and commission previously laid upon Him by the Father, as we've already seen.

Christ's work may be grouped under three headings, all flowing from His voluntary undertaking:

II. The First Work: His Incarnation

The foundation of all that followed was His incarnation—His taking on flesh and dwelling among us.

As John wrote:

"The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

And Paul:

"God sent forth his Son, made of a woman" (Galatians 4:4).

This was the "mystery of godliness":

"God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16).

He did not assume a private individual or human person, but rather the whole human nature, which He united to Himself.

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same" (Hebrews 2:14).

The "children whom the Lord gave him" (v.13) were the reason He partook of human nature—not all mankind, but the elect children. For their sakes,

"He sanctified himself" (John 17:19).

This humbling of Himself, this tabernacling among us, was the work of the Son alone—the Father and the Spirit had no part in it except by eternal

counsel and approval.

III. The Second Work: His Oblation

Next comes Christ's oblation—His offering up of Himself:

"Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God" (Hebrews 9:14).

"He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood" (Revelation 1:5).

"He loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

He took the cup of wrath from the Father's hand—due to us, not to Himself (Daniel 9:26)—and He drank it to the dregs.

"For our sakes I sanctify myself" (John 17:19).

"When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6).

This was the very thing foretold and typified in all the ceremonies and sacrifices of the old covenant. When those symbols were ready to pass away, Christ declared:

"Lo, I come to do thy will" (Hebrews 10:9).

Now, although the focus of Scripture is often on what Christ suffered, the value of that offering lies in His willingness. Without His free and voluntary act, His death would not have been a true offering.

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

And how did He approach the altar? Not unwillingly.

"He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter… so he opened not his mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).

"I lay down my life… no man taketh it from me" (John 10:17–18).

"He loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

"He gave himself… a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Ephesians 5:2).

This wasn't done with reluctance, but with joy and purpose:

"Lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (Hebrews 10:9).

He "bare our sins in his own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24).

This oblation encompasses His whole life—His entire earthly ministry, His obedience, His sufferings, His prayers and tears, and above all, the laying down of His soul as a ransom (Matthew 20:28).

His ascension and appearance in the true holy of holies, sprinkled with His own blood, leads us to the third part of His work.

IV. The Third Work: His Intercession

Christ not only died for His own, but also intercedes for them:

He did not suffer on their behalf only to neglect them afterward. He did not do the greater and omit the lesser.

"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance" (Psalm 2:8).
"I go to prepare a place for you… that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:2–3).

Just as the high priest went into the most holy place once a year with blood (Hebrews 9:7),

"Christ… by his own blood… entered… into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us" (vv.11–12, 24).

He does this not with pleading and weeping—He is no longer in a lowly state—but with divine authority, presenting Himself and His blood before the Father on our behalf.

"We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).
"He is the propitiation for our sins" (v.2).

Because He is our propitiation, He is also our intercessor. The two go together.

Christ plainly said:

"I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me" (John 17:9).

He doesn't pray for all. If He did, all would be saved—

"I knew that thou hearest me always" (John 11:42).

"He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:25).

Hence Paul's great confidence:

"It is Christ that died… who also maketh intercession for us" (Romans 8:34).
And therefore:
"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" (v.33).

If Christ died for you, then He intercedes for you. If He intercedes for you, then your salvation is sure. This leaves no room for the idea that Christ died for all—many of whom will perish.

This intercession is not a pleading from weakness, but a majestic presentation of His finished work:

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" (John 17:24).

He appears in glory with His own blood on behalf of those for whom He died.

Let us not forget that the Father promised the Son a people to save, and that His intercession is based on that divine agreement. He is to bring many sons to glory (Hebrews 2:10).

Because of this, we are encouraged to

"draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:22),
for

"by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (v.14).

Much more could be said—but this suffices for now.

Chapter 4 Concerning Those Things in the Work of Redemption Peculiarly Ascribed to the Son

Secondly, the Son Himself is revealed as a central agent in this grand work of redemption, not by compulsion but by a willing and voluntary acceptance of the office laid upon Him. For when it was said, "Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, in burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hadst no pleasure," then Christ responded, "Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God," (Hebrews 10:6–7). All other ways being insufficient, Christ alone undertook the task, He "in whom [the Father] was well pleased," (Matthew 3:17).

The Lord Jesus plainly declared, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me," (John 6:38); and again, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work," (John 4:34). Even His first recorded words in Scripture bore witness to this divine commission: "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2:49). And at the end of His earthly ministry, He said, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do," (John 17:4).

Now, the Son's undertaking may be considered under three principal headings:

1. His Incarnation

First, we consider His incarnation—what John called His dwelling among us: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," (John 1:14). The apostle Paul writes, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law," (Galatians 4:4). And again, "Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh," (1 Timothy 3:16).

The Son did not assume a particular human person, but rather our common human nature, taking it into personal union with His divine person. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same," (Hebrews 2:14). He did this not for the whole world, but specifically for "the children which God hath given [him]," (Hebrews 2:13). It was for their sake that He sanctified Himself.

This act of condescension—His emptying of Himself and taking on flesh—was the unique work of the second person of the Godhead. The Father and the Spirit were involved only in approving and decreeing this mystery from eternity.

2. His Oblation (Offering)

Secondly, we consider His oblation—His offering up of Himself unto God, "without spot," to purge our consciences from dead works (Hebrews 9:14). "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," (Revelation 1:5). "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it," (Ephesians 5:25).

He took the cup of wrath from His Father's hand and drank it—not for Himself, "but for us" (Daniel 9:26). "For their sakes I sanctify myself," He said (John 17:19). He was "delivered for our offences," and "died for the ungodly" (Romans 5:6).

Christ was no reluctant victim. He declared: "I lay down my life... No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself" (John 10:17–18). As Isaiah foretold, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter... he openeth not his mouth," (Isaiah 53:7).

His sacrifice was voluntary, and therefore of infinite worth. "He loved me, and gave himself for me," (Galatians 2:20). Only that which is offered from a free and willing heart may rightly be called a gift. So Paul writes: "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour," (Ephesians 5:2).

This oblation includes all that Christ did and suffered in the days of His flesh—from His prayers and tears to His death upon the cross—until He had "by himself purged our sins," and "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high," (Hebrews 1:3).

3. His Intercession

Thirdly, His intercession. Christ did not offer Himself on the cross and then forget those He redeemed. No—He continues to plead for them in heaven. He said, "I go to prepare a place for you," (John 14:2). As the high priest once entered into the holy of holies with blood, so "Christ... by his own blood...

entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us," (Hebrews 9:11–12).

He is now in heaven, "to appear in the presence of God for us," (Hebrews 9:24). He is our Advocate, "Jesus Christ the righteous," (1 John 2:1), and the ground of His intercession is this: "He is the propitiation for our sins," (1 John 2:2). That is why He prays not for the world, but only for those whom the Father gave Him: "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me," (John 17:9).

Since the Father always hears the Son (John 11:42), if He were to intercede for all without distinction, then all would be saved. But this cannot be, for "He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," (Hebrews 7:25).

This gives the apostle Paul boldness to exclaim: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth... it is Christ that died... who also maketh intercession for us," (Romans 8:33–34). Thus, for whom He died, He intercedes—and none else.

Christ does not kneel in humble petition as a supplicant—such posture would ill suit the dignity of Him who sits at the right hand of God. Rather, He presents Himself, bearing the marks of His sacrifice, and says: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am," (John 17:24).

For those whom He died for, He now appears. He does not intercede for any others. And so His death and intercession are joined as one great work. "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified," (Hebrews 10:14). More on this shall follow in due course.

Book 1:Chapter 7

That Christ's Offering and Intercession Are One Unified Work Aimed at One End for One People

I. United in Scripture

Our first reason lies in the way Scripture consistently joins Christ's offering (His oblation) and His intercession. These are never treated as separate or

independent acts, but always together—pointing to one purpose and one people. Isaiah 53:11 says, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities." The bearing of iniquities—His sacrifice—directly leads to justification, the fruit of intercession.

In verse 12 of the same chapter, the two are joined plainly: "He bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." The "many" whose sin He bore are the same transgressors for whom He intercedes. Likewise, verse 5 states, "With his stripes we are healed." The healing we receive is a direct effect of His suffering—it flows from His stripes, and thus from His offering.

Paul echoes this in Romans 4:25: "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." Those for whose sins He died are the very same for whom He rose to secure justification. If He died for all, then all must be justified—or else God's purpose failed in both Christ's death and resurrection, a notion unworthy of God and rightly abhorred.

Romans 8:33–34 speaks with unshakable clarity: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died... yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." The ones He died for, He also intercedes for. If He intercedes only for some, then He must have died only for them—else we divide what Scripture joins.

II. One Office, Two Duties

Both sacrifice and intercession belong to Christ's priestly office. A priest must do both—offer the sacrifice and seek its effect. If Christ fails in either, He is no priest for that person. But 1 John 2:1–2 joins both: "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and he is the propitiation for our sins." He is both sacrifice and intercessor.

Hebrews strengthens this truth. Christ, our great High Priest, entered the heavenly sanctuary not with animal blood but with His own. There, He intercedes—just as the high priest entered the Most Holy Place with blood to pray for the people. Hebrews 9:12 declares, "He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." Hebrews 7:25 adds, "He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Thus, if Christ acts as a priest for anyone, He must both offer for them and intercede for them. The extent of His intercession is the extent of His offering—they are inseparably linked.

III. The Nature of His Intercession

Christ's intercession is not vocal entreaty but His very presence in heaven on our behalf. Hebrews 9:24 says, "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands... but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." As the high priest appeared before God with blood, Christ now appears with the merit of His own sacrifice.

His intercession is the continued effect of His oblation. Before the cross, He interceded based on what He was to do (John 17). After His death, He intercedes based on what He has done. It is not a separate act, but the remembrance and application of His finished work. Therefore, He cannot have died for those for whom He does not intercede—it would be to present the sacrifice and never plead its merit, a contradiction both in reason and Scripture.

IV. The Foundation of His Intercession

Christ's intercession rests on promises made by the Father. Psalm 2:8 says, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance." This was promised in light of His suffering, as shown in Acts 4:27–28. Everything Christ asks for was promised Him as reward for His obedience unto death.

Therefore, His intercession is for the same ones for whom He died. All that is asked for is what was earned by His blood. Until these blessings are bestowed, His offering has not fully borne its fruit. To claim He died for those who never receive these blessings is to deny both Scripture and common sense.

V. Let No Man Divide Them

Christ Himself joins offering and intercession. In John 17, He both offers Himself (in intent) and intercedes for His people. Verse 4 says, "I have finished the work," though the cross was yet to come—because His will was resolute. There He prays not for the world but for those given Him by the Father.

1 Corinthians 15:17 teaches that without resurrection (and its intercession), Christ's death profits us nothing. Hebrews 9:12 shows that the high priest's entrance into the Holy Place was necessary for redemption to be applied. So it is with Christ. We must not separate what He has joined.

VI. The Ground of Our Consolation

To divide Christ's death from His intercession is to rob the believer of assurance. Our full comfort comes from knowing that Christ not only died for us but also appears for us. Hebrews 7:25 says He saves to the uttermost those who come unto God by Him—because He ever liveth to intercede.

What good is it to believe Christ died for me, if He may not plead for me? If my sins may yet accuse me and He remain silent? But He does not remain silent. Romans 8:34 says, "It is Christ that died... yea rather, that is risen again... who also maketh intercession for us." Here is solid consolation.

Our sins cannot rise to condemn us in the court where He appears for us. His death and His intercession are one complete work—done for the same people, aiming at their complete and eternal salvation.

Chapter 8: Objections Against the Former Proposal Answered

In the last chapter, we plainly demonstrated that both the offering (or oblation) and the intercession of Christ are directed to the same people — those for whom He gave Himself and for whom He continually intercedes. These two works are not to be separated but understood together, as one joint means working toward one certain end — the full and final salvation of God's elect. Before we go on to consider what that end is, I must first clear away a few objections that have been raised — "as a man removeth dung, until it be all gone" (1 Kings 14:10).

One of our main points has been that sacrifice and intercession are both functions of the same office — that of the High Priest. No one can rightly be called a high priest unless he performs both duties. Christ, our Saviour, is not just any high priest, but the true and final one — the substance of all the Old Testament types. In Him is found everything those earlier priests merely hinted at. He performs both the offering and the intercession for the same people — those for whom He came to be a priest.

I. The Nature of Christ's Office Misrepresented

Some have attempted to answer our argument by proposing the following: "The ransom and mediation of Christ are no greater than His offices as Prophet, Priest, and King — and these offices belong to His church and His chosen. Therefore, His ransom pertains to them only."

This statement essentially agrees with our position — that Christ offered nothing on behalf of any but those for whom He is High Priest, and that His intercession is only for the same group. But those who oppose us have tried to downplay this truth and make light of it. One writer even calls it a "sober objection" — perhaps because he thought it easily answered. Yet, when I read his response, I found nothing but further confusion and false conclusions.

At first glance, it seems he praised the objection only because it didn't directly deny that Christ died for all men — it only rejected the idea that He ransomed and mediated for all. But this is no better. To say that Christ died for all, and yet did not ransom all, is nonsense. Christ Himself said He came to "give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). His death is a ransom. If you strip away the ransom, you strip away the meaning of the cross.

II. The Argument of "General Mediation" Examined

The opponent then says Christ's mediation is both general and special:

General, as in "one mediator between God and men" (1 Tim. 2:5)

Special, as in "mediator of the new testament" for those "which are called" (Heb. 9:15)

And so, "Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe" (1 Tim. 4:10)

This, he claims, justifies saying that Christ is a priest generally for all, but especially for His own people.

But what does this actually prove? Nothing. If Christ is a general mediator and priest, then what covenant is He mediating outside the New Covenant? There is no such thing. A mediator is always tied to a covenant — and He is called "surety of a better testament" (Heb. 7:22), not of the old one, which has been done away.

To say Christ mediates under any other covenant is to strip the Gospel of its power. He is not the mediator of the covenant of works, for that would contradict the entire New Testament. Such an idea is foreign to Scripture and would be laughable were it not so serious.

III. The False Division of Christ's Work

Some have tried to divide Christ's mediation like this:

For some people, He died and intercedes — the elect.

For others, He only died — without intercession.

For yet others, He neither died nor intercedes.

This division is wholly unscriptural. The Bible never teaches that Christ acts as High Priest for anyone but His church, His sheep, His elect.

"He redeemed the church with his own blood." (Acts 20:28)

"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." (Eph. 5:25)

"I lay down my life for the sheep." (John 10:15)

"He ever liveth to make intercession for them." (Heb. 7:25)

Not a word is spoken in Scripture about Him mediating for the world or the ungodly in general.

IV. Misuse of Scripture to Justify General Redemption

They quote 1 Timothy 2:5 — "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men." But this says nothing about the scope of the mediation. That Christ is the mediator means there is no other — not that He mediates for all without exception. Even if He were mediator for only the elect, the verse remains true.

The same misuse applies to 1 Timothy 4:10: "Who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe." But this verse speaks of God's providential care and preservation — not of Christ's priestly mediation. God is called

Saviour in the sense that He sustains all life — as Psalm 36:6 says, "O Lord, thou preservest man and beast." He is especially the Saviour of believers, because He redeems them in Christ.

V. The True Meaning of Christ's Intercession

Some argue from Isaiah 53:12 — "He made intercession for the transgressors" — and Luke 23:34 — "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" — that Christ intercedes generally for all sinners.

But this is a misunderstanding:

In Isaiah, the "transgressors" are those for whom He died — not all mankind.

In Luke, His prayer is for a specific group — those who crucified Him in ignorance. And indeed, this prayer was answered: thousands of them believed shortly after Pentecost (Acts 2:41; Acts 3:17; Acts 6:7).

This was not a general intercession for all men, but a specific and effectual one for some.

VI. Christ's Personal Prayers vs. Priestly Intercession

Another confusion lies in failing to distinguish between Christ's prayers as a man and His intercession as High Priest.

When He said, "Father, forgive them," He was acting in personal obedience to the Law — loving His enemies, not performing a priestly intercession for the world. As Mediator, His intercession is always effectual — He is always heard (John 11:42). If He were praying for all to be saved, then all would be saved — and clearly, they are not.

VII. The Case of John 17 Misapplied

In John 17:21–23, Christ prays that the world may "believe" and "know" that the Father sent Him. This is often taken to support the idea of a general intercession. But closer inspection shows otherwise.

In verse 9 He says clearly: "I pray not for the world."

The "world" in verses 21–23 refers to observers who, seeing the unity of believers, are convinced of Christ's divine mission — not necessarily converted.

This "belief" is more about public recognition than saving faith.

Thus, it cannot be used to support the idea of a general saving intercession.

VIII. Concluding Defence

They finally appeal to John 1:9 — "That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." But the light here is not saving grace — it is the general light of conscience or reason, given to all as creatures. The verse doesn't say Christ saves or mediates for all — only that all light comes from Him.

Likewise, they wrongly divide the ends of Christ's death — saying He died for all men in one sense (e.g. making atonement), but only for the elect in another sense (e.g. effecting salvation). This is entirely artificial.

When the Bible says Christ "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Heb. 9:26), or "gave himself a ransom," or "shed his blood for the remission of sins" (Matt. 26:28), these are all expressions of one and the same act — the atonement. You cannot chop it up into general and special pieces.

IX. Final Word

So, our argument stands: Christ's priestly work — both His offering and His intercession — are for the same people. He does not die for some and intercede for others. He is a faithful High Priest, and all His work is effective, certain, and saving — not a mere offer or possibility.

Those for whom He died, He will surely bring to glory.

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied." (Isaiah 53:11)

Book 2 – Chapter 1

Preliminary Thoughts Before Examining the True End and Effect of Christ's Death

We now come to the very heart of the whole debate about the death of Christ — the point upon which everything turns. This matter bears the greatest weight and is what all our earlier arguments have been building towards: namely, the proper end and purpose of Christ's death.

Whoever rightly defines and explains this will, in truth, be fit to act as an umpire in the whole controversy. For if the purpose of Christ's death is what many of our opponents claim, then we ourselves would have no reason to deny that He died for all and every individual. But if the end be as we affirm — that it was specifically for the elect — then it cannot be extended beyond believers. Thus, this matter must be firmly established and carefully proven by any who hope to succeed in this doctrinal contest.

We stated at the beginning that the end of Christ's death is our drawing near to God — a broad term that encompasses the whole work of reconciling sinners: from a state of alienation, misery, and wrath, into one of grace, peace, and everlasting communion with Him.

Now, in all things there is a twofold end:

The end of the worker (what he intends).

The end of the work itself (what it achieves).

We've already shown that unless the one doing the work lacks wisdom or power — choosing unfit means or failing to make proper use of them — then these two ends always align. That is, the work accomplishes the purpose for which it was intended.

In the case before us, the worker is none other than the blessed Trinity — the Three-in-One — and the means used to reach the end were the offering and intercession of Jesus Christ. These are united, directed toward the same goal, as we have already explained. Therefore, unless we are willing to commit blasphemy by accusing God of lacking wisdom, power, or perfection — or claim that Christ's death and intercession were not suited to achieve the intended end — we must conclude that the intended end and the actual result are one and the same.

Whatever the blessed Trinity purposed by Christ's death and intercession, that is what was truly accomplished. And whatever the Scriptures declare

to be the result of these, that is what God intended from the beginning. So, there's no reason to separate the death and intercession of Christ, except perhaps to reason from one to the other — for example, if we read that some benefit flows from His death, we can be sure God intended that benefit for those for whom Christ died, and the same holds true in reverse.

Two Kinds of Ends: Ultimate and Intermediate

The end of Christ's death can be considered in two ways:

The Ultimate and Supreme End

This is the glory of God — the revealing of His glorious attributes, especially His justice and His mercy tempered by justice.

God, being the highest good — indeed, the only one who is absolutely and eternally good — always seeks Himself in the first place. This is true in all His works, but especially in this great work of redemption. His first and chief intention is always the manifestation of His own glory — and this He fully accomplishes in the end.

"The Lord hath made all things for himself" (Proverbs 16:4)

"All things are for your sakes, that the abundant grace...might redound to the glory of God" (2 Corinthians 4:15)

"Ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's" (1 Corinthians 3:23)

In other words, Christ serves the glory of God in all that He does. Paul says in Ephesians 1:6 that our election, redemption, and all spiritual blessings are "to the praise of the glory of his grace," and again in verse 12, "That we should be to the praise of his glory."

The same theme is found in Philippians 1:11, where the fruits of righteousness by Jesus Christ are said to be "unto the glory and praise of God." In chapter 2:11, "That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Romans chapter 9 declares the absolute sovereignty and independence of God in all His actions. He takes no direction from man, but works "all things after the counsel of his own will," aiming always and only at His own glory.

And this will most certainly be accomplished in the end, when all creation will proclaim:

"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power,
be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."
(Revelation 5:13)

The Intermediate End — Our Reconciliation to God

This is the subordinate goal, which serves that ultimate end. It is what Christ's death achieves in respect of us — and it is this which we now examine in detail. As we've said, this is the bringing of sinners unto God.

Now, although this is one unified purpose when it comes to Christ's offering and intercession, it can still be broken into two parts:

One is the means to the end

The other is the end itself

Yet both are equally the goal of Christ's work as our Mediator. God has ordained that there be a necessary connection between the blessings Christ purchased for us, such that one leads to the other. One is the condition, and the other is the reward promised on that condition — but both were secured equally by Christ's work. If either were missing, the whole would fail, as we shall explain more fully in due course.
Faith and Salvation: Means and End

Both parts of Christ's purchased blessings involve a communication of God's goodness to us and our participation in Him. These may be described in terms of:

Grace and Glory

Holiness and Blessedness

Faith and Salvation

In these terms:

Faith is the means (or condition)

Salvation is the end (or promised reward)

By faith, we mean not just belief, but the whole set of saving graces that accompany it. And by salvation, we mean the full glory that shall be revealed — the liberty and blessedness of the children of God (Romans 8:18, 21), an eternal enjoyment of God Himself.

What Comes with Faith

Faith brings with it every effectual means necessary for salvation:

The external preaching of the Word

The internal working of the Holy Spirit

Justification, reconciliation, adoption

Sanctification and every grace that flows from it

All the privileges believers enjoy in this life

All of these are the fruits of redemption, purchased by Christ in His death. And we affirm that a real, effectual, and certain bestowal of all these things — both the means (faith and grace) and the end (salvation and glory) — is indeed the purpose and effect of the blood of Christ.

Christ's Death Accomplishes What It Intends

We therefore maintain that every individual for whom Christ died has, by that very death, a right secured unto all these blessings — and that in due time, they shall most certainly receive them.

Put simply: Christ's intention in dying was to obtain grace and glory from His Father for a definite people, and His intention was that these blessings should surely be given to them. Some of these gifts — such as salvation — are received upon the condition of faith. But faith itself is granted without condition, and entirely through the merit and purpose of Christ's death.

This we shall now further explain and prove — once we have cleared away a

few false ends that others have wrongly assigned to the death of Christ.

Book 2 – Chapter 2

Correcting False Notions About the End of Christ's Death

We have already shown that the death, offering, and blood-shedding of Jesus Christ are to be viewed as a means — a sacred means — to accomplish a definite, appointed end. His suffering was not in itself desirable, but it was undertaken for the sake of the good it was meant to bring about.

Now, since the end of any work must itself be something good (for bonum et finis convertuntur — "the good and the end are convertible"), the purpose of Christ's death must be either:

something for His Father's good,

something for His own good,

or something for our good.

Let us examine these in order.

I. Was the End of Christ's Death Merely for His Own Good?

Certainly not.

In His divine nature, Christ already shared eternally in the full glory of the Godhead. That glory was, is, and always shall be absolute, perfect, and unchanging. Though the manifestation of that glory to men may vary, in itself it never increases nor diminishes.

When He prayed, "Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5), He was not seeking a glory He lacked — only the restoration of what He had voluntarily laid aside for a season during His earthly humiliation.

As for His human nature, Christ was eternally appointed — from before the foundation of the world — to be united personally with the Second Person of the Trinity. From the moment of His conception, He was the God-man. He

did not need to earn anything for Himself by His suffering. He was sinless, perfectly righteous under the law, and had no need to die for His own sake.

The glory He pursued in enduring the cross was not a self-centred glory, but "the bringing of many sons unto glory" (Hebrews 2:10). His exaltation as the risen Lord and Judge of all was indeed a result of His humiliation, but this was a consequence, not the aim of His death. His death was not a transaction for personal advancement, but the fulfilment of the covenant of redemption.

He was already "heir of all things," and already "upholding all things by the word of his power" (Hebrews 1:2–3). His rule and authority extend over "all the works of God's hands" (Psalm 8:6), including angels, over whom He exercises judgment (1 Corinthians 6:3). Yet He did not die for angels (Hebrews 2:16). So clearly, His authority over them does not arise from atoning for them.

Rather, His dominion and office as King and Judge were granted to Him from the Father's eternal love:

"The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:35; cf. Matthew 11:27).

Even if we were to admit — for the sake of argument — that Christ's death secured this authority (though that cannot be proven), it still would not support the doctrine of universal atonement. The power of judgment includes the power to condemn as well as to save:

"The Father... hath committed all judgment unto the Son" (John 5:22).
"He hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man" (v.27).

Are we to believe that Christ died for men in order to condemn them? That would contradict the whole meaning of redemption. If He redeemed them, He cannot then have died to condemn them. The one excludes the other.

II. Was the Death of Christ Aimed at His Father's Good?

No again — not in the immediate sense.

Of course, the ultimate end of Christ's death was "the praise of the glory of his grace" (Ephesians 1:6), and the full display of divine mercy and justice.

But we are not now speaking of the ultimate and remote end, but of the immediate purpose of His suffering. And in that respect, the death of Christ was not about giving anything to God, but rather bringing all good things from God to us.

The Arminians and Universalists argue that the purpose of Christ's death was to satisfy divine justice so that God might now be free to forgive sinners — if He chose to. They say God had a gracious intention toward mankind but was prevented from expressing it by sin and justice. Therefore, they claim, Christ died to remove that hindrance, thus allowing God to forgive whom He pleases, under whatever conditions He might propose.

But this entire line of thinking is both false and dangerous. Let us explain why.

1. False Foundation: That God Could Not Forgive Without Satisfaction

The entire argument rests on the idea that God could not show mercy to sinners unless satisfaction was first made by Christ.

Now, if God willed to save sinners in this way, through satisfaction, then yes — it was indeed necessary. For God never changes (James 1:17), and His purposes stand firm (1 Samuel 15:29).

But to claim that God, in His nature, could not forgive without this, before He had ordained it, is to go beyond what Scripture teaches. That idea is nothing but human speculation. The Bible never says that satisfaction was absolutely necessary in itself, only that God chose to glorify Himself in this way — by sending His Son to suffer in our stead.

As Augustine wisely said:

"Though other ways of saving us were not wanting to his infinite wisdom, yet certainly the way which he did proceed in was the most fitting — because we see that He did proceed in it."

2. False Motive: That the Cross Was Based on a General Wish to Help Mankind

The view we oppose makes the death of Christ flow from a vague desire

on God's part to help sinners in general — not from His sovereign, eternal purpose to redeem His elect. That turns the cross into a hypothetical scheme, not a definite plan.

3. False Focus: That Christ Died to Redeem a Freedom for God, Not Sinners

If Christ's death simply gave God the right to forgive (rather than actually securing forgiveness for His people), then His death was more about releasing God from a limitation, than about redeeming us from sin.

In other words, Christ purchased God's liberty to forgive — rather than our liberty from death. But Scripture never says Christ came to redeem His Father, but rather to redeem His people from their sins (Matthew 1:21).

Where in Scripture is there any hint that God sent His Son out of love for Himself, rather than love for us? Are we not the ones who benefit directly from the cross?

And if you say, "Yes, but once God had this right, He could then forgive us on the condition of faith or obedience," then you have destroyed the meaning of merit.

What Christ merited must be actually given — not merely made possible. If a man works all day, his wages are not merely optional — they are owed. "To him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (Romans 4:4).

Even though the application of Christ's death to us is a matter of free grace — the purchase He made for us was real, effectual, and binding.

4. False Outcome: That Christ's Death Could Be Fulfilled Without Saving Anyone

If the only outcome of Christ's death was to give God a right to forgive if He pleased, then it is entirely possible — under this view — that no one would actually be saved. The death of Christ would then become a door that opened salvation, but did not secure it for anyone.

That's not what the Bible teaches.

Christ came to save that which was lost (Luke 19:10). He came to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). He came to bear our sins in his own body on the tree (1 Peter 2:24). These are not possibilities — they are accomplished facts.

Could Christ have offered such a prayer as this —

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am" (John 17:24)

— if there were no guarantee they would be saved?

No, He prayed as One who had purchased them, and who had the right to ask for their glorification.

To say otherwise is to turn the cross into a "maybe" — not a victory.

What Did Christ Actually Purchase?

Ask these Universalists what God actually gained through Christ's death, and they will say:

"He gained the right to offer a new covenant — to forgive on condition of faith."

But we say Christ Himself is the chief promise of the new covenant (see Genesis 3:15). The covenant wasn't created by His death — He was sent because of it. And the obedience required by the covenant (faith, repentance, holiness) is itself a promise of the covenant (Jeremiah 31:33). Even the condition is a gift.

So it cannot be that Christ purchased the possibility of salvation — He purchased salvation itself.

Conclusion

Yes, in respect to God, Christ's death served to manifest His glory:

"Thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified" (Isaiah 49:3).

"To declare his righteousness...that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:25–26).

But in respect to us, the end of Christ's death was not that God might forgive

if He wanted to — but that He should, by covenant promise, actually give us all the blessings Christ purchased: forgiveness, faith, grace, and everlasting life.

And that — the true end of Christ's offering — is what we shall now go on to show.

Chapter 3: The True and Proper End of the Death of Christ

Having cleared away some of the false ideas people hold regarding the purpose of Christ's death, we now move on to show plainly and fully what the true and proper end of His death was, according to the Scriptures.

We affirm that the death of Christ was not a vague offer or mere possibility, but rather a deliberate and effectual means of securing and bestowing real spiritual blessings — both grace and glory — for a definite people.

I. The Nature of This End

The true end of the death of Christ, in relation to us, was to bring us to God — to secure all things needed to draw lost sinners out of alienation and wrath and into grace, favour, and everlasting life. This includes the full and certain giving of:

Faith, as the means of receiving,

Salvation, as the end attained,

And all other spiritual blessings that lead from one to the other — such as justification, sanctification, and adoption.

We believe that these are not merely made available, but are infallibly and effectively bestowed upon all those for whom Christ died.

II. Grace and Glory, Means and End

The blessings Christ purchased may be broadly divided into:

Means – such as faith, repentance, the preaching of the Word, the regenerating work of the Spirit, and sanctification.

Ends – such as justification, reconciliation with God, and everlasting glory.

Now, these two are inseparably joined. One cannot be given without the other. Faith is not something a man conjures up on his own; it is a gift from God, purchased by Christ. And salvation is not a reward for fulfilling conditions; it is the rightful inheritance secured by Christ's blood.

So then, every man for whom Christ died, God will in due time give the means (faith) and bring to the end (salvation). There is no uncertainty in the matter.

III. The Blood of Christ Did Not Merely Open the Door

Many falsely imagine that Christ's death merely created a possibility of salvation — that He purchased a right for God to forgive if He so wished. But this robs Christ's death of its power. His blood did not purchase a bare opportunity. It purchased the actual redemption of the people He died for.

As it is written:

"Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

He did not die to make men saveable — He died to save them.

IV. The Work of Christ and the Will of the Father

All that Christ did, He did in obedience to the will of His Father, and with the end of glorifying Him through saving His elect.

As the apostle saith:

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world... having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself... to the praise of the glory of his grace." (Ephesians 1:4–6)

And again:

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)

All things Christ purchased for His own, He purchased effectually — grace, faith, and glory.

V. The True End Summed Up

We conclude, therefore, that the true and proper end of the death of Christ, in respect of those for whom He died, was not to provide a general offer or a conditional benefit, but to secure the real, infallible, and certain bestowal of all saving benefits.

He bought not merely a permission for men to come — but the very means by which they shall come:

> "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." (John 6:37)

To deny this is to weaken the power of Christ's blood, and to make His cross a mere gesture, rather than a finished, effectual work.

Let no man divide His intention from His accomplishment. Christ died not in vain — He died to save, and save He shall.

hapter 3 – Of the Distinction of Impetration and Application

We must now take a closer look at a clever little trick our opponents use to wriggle out of the plain meaning of many clear Scriptures. This tactic, like a universal remedy in their theological first-aid kit, is their go-to explanation whenever they're pressed with hard questions about the effect of Christ's death.

I. The Great Distinction Claimed by Our Opponents

They argue that there are two distinct parts to the blessings Christ secured:

Impetration – That is, the purchase or obtaining of benefits through Christ's death.

Application – That is, the bestowal of those benefits upon individuals.

They say Christ, by His death, purchased salvation for everyone – reconciliation, forgiveness, redemption – for all men without exception. But

they claim this salvation is only applied to those who believe. That, they say, is why not all are saved – not because Christ didn't purchase it for them, but because they didn't meet the condition of faith.

Some versions of this view differ in detail:

The Arminians say Christ died for all, purchasing forgiveness and favour, which becomes effective if and when people believe.

Others (like Camero and certain French divines) say Christ died conditionally for some and absolutely for His own elect, knowing they would believe by grace.

Some speak of a double reconciliation – one purchased by Christ, one worked within us.

But they all agree on one central idea: Christ obtained redemption for all, but it is applied only to believers.

II. The True Meaning and Limits of This Distinction

Now, to be clear, we do not reject the distinction itself. There's truth in it – rightly understood. Christ did purchase blessings for His people, and they do not enjoy those blessings until they are applied to them by faith. Like a man who buys the freedom of slaves – they aren't free until the chains are loosed and the gates opened.

But the abuse of this distinction lies in applying it to universal redemption – as though Christ purchased salvation for all, knowing it would only ever be applied to some. That is false, and here's why:

In Christ's Intention, Impetration and Application Are United
Christ didn't aim to merely buy salvation and then see what might happen. No, He meant to actually save His people. He came to save His sheep (John 10:11), to bring many sons to glory (Heb. 2:10), and to redeem us from all iniquity (Titus 2:14). That was His aim – and He does not fail.

God's Will in This Matter Is Not Conditional
God did not give Christ to die on the off-chance that someone might believe. No, His will was fixed – that Christ would obtain salvation for His elect, and

that salvation would be applied. Faith, the condition of receiving blessings, is itself a gift – purchased by Christ and freely given.

Impetration and Application Concern the Same Individuals
If Christ died for someone, that person will receive the benefits in due time. He will be reconciled to God and justified by faith – because both the price and the gift are covered by Christ. To say otherwise is to divide Christ's work and turn His cross into an uncertain venture.

III. The Errors of Universal Redemption Made Plain

Let us now summarise the opposing view and its fatal flaws:

They say God loves all people and wishes they would be saved – a love they call His "antecedent will." But:

God's love is not a weak longing but a sovereign purpose.

He has mercy on whom He will have mercy (Rom. 9:15).

He does not have a general wish to save those He has predestined to wrath (1 Thess. 5:9).

They say God must send Christ to satisfy justice before He can show love. But:

God acts freely – not out of necessity but by His will.

Christ was sent because of God's eternal love, not to make God loving.

They say Christ's death opened a door for salvation – making it possible for any to be saved if they meet the condition. But:

Christ came to save His people, not to merely offer salvation.

His death was not a vague possibility but a definite achievement.

They say all men were reconciled, and forgiveness purchased for all – even those who perish. But:

If forgiveness was truly purchased for them, they would be forgiven.

To say otherwise is to deny the power and purpose of Christ's blood.

They deny that Christ procured faith for His people. They say we must believe by our own strength or mere help. But:

Faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8).

Christ is the author and finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2).

IV. The Glorious Simplicity of the Truth

We don't need strange theories or slippery distinctions. The truth is plain:

God, out of His sovereign love for the elect, sent Christ to die for them.

Christ, in obedience, gave His life as a ransom – of infinite value – to secure their eternal salvation.

He purchased for them every blessing: forgiveness, faith, righteousness, and glory.

He now intercedes for them, and all He purchased shall be surely applied.

This is the simple, clear, and glorious gospel: "He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).

No twisting needed. No guesswork. No vague hope. Just sovereign grace, a victorious Redeemer, and a people redeemed unto everlasting life.

Chapter 5: Of Application and Impetration

This final chapter draws to a close the debate about whether the benefits Christ obtained by His death can be separated from their application to the soul. In short, although the terms impetration (Christ obtaining grace for us) and application (God applying that grace to us) may be distinguished in meaning, they can never be separated in reality. For whomever Christ obtained any good by His death, that good will surely and unfailingly be applied to them.

Let us now examine why the Arminian and Universalist notion — that Christ died for all men equally, yet that the benefits of His death are only applied to some — is not only unscriptural, but also unreasonable and contrary to sound doctrine.

I. Common Sense and the Nature of Gifts

When a man obtains a thing for another, we say he has secured it for him. If I win a legal case on someone's behalf, that benefit belongs to him by right, even if he has not yet taken possession of it. To say otherwise would be a contradiction.

So it is with Christ's death: if He truly obtained reconciliation, forgiveness, or peace with God for a person, that person must surely receive it in due time. To suggest Christ purchased such benefits for someone and yet they never receive them is to treat His purchase as uncertain, or His grace as idle.

II. The Will and Intention of God

If God willed that Christ should die for someone, then it follows that He willed for that person to benefit from Christ's death. Yet, according to the opposing view, Christ died for all men, even those who never believe and perish everlastingly. But what sense does it make to say that God willed their reconciliation through Christ's death, and yet never applies that reconciliation to them?

The answer must be: either God's will is divided against itself — or Christ's death was never truly intended for them.

III. Ransom and Release

When a ransom is paid for captives, it is for the express purpose of setting them free. Yet, the opposing view claims that Christ paid the ransom for all, while the majority remain in bondage and perish. This makes Christ's ransom ineffective — and contradicts both justice and divine purpose.

"The Son of man came... to give his life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28)

IV. Misuse of Conditionality

Some argue: "Ah, but these benefits are conditional. Christ obtained them for all, but they are only given to those who meet the condition — namely, faith." But this response fails for several reasons:

The condition must be known. If Christ died for all, and the benefits are conditional, then all must be told of the condition. But what of infants, pagans, and multitudes who never hear the gospel?

The condition must be possible. If faith is the condition, then men must have the power to believe. But faith is not in man's natural power; it is the gift of God:

"Unto you it is given... to believe on him." (Philippians 1:29)

If God does not give faith to all, then He has no intention of saving all — and thus Christ's death was not for all.

Faith is itself a fruit of Christ's death. If Christ died to purchase faith for His people, then to make faith the pre-condition of benefiting from His death is to put the effect before the cause.

It makes Christ a half Mediator. If Christ secured salvation, but not the means of obtaining it, He is made but a partial Saviour. But Scripture says:

"He shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

V. The Proper Order of Salvation

Faith is the condition of salvation — but it is not a condition man meets of his own strength. It is a gift, purchased and granted by Christ. We are not saved because we believe, as if our faith causes Christ to die for us. Rather, Christ died for us so that we would believe and be saved.

To say, "If you believe, then Christ died for you," is to make our act create the object — which is nonsense. The truth is: Christ died for His elect that they should believe, and believing, have life through His name.

Conclusion

Let this chapter serve as a closing word on the matter: Christ did not die for any man conditionally, but effectually. He died not merely to make salvation possible, but to secure it for all whom the Father gave Him.

Application and impetration are thus joined inseparably. What Christ purchased by His blood shall certainly be bestowed by His Spirit.

The benefits of Christ's death are not like medicine in a box, waiting to be taken. They are like healing already flowing into the veins of those for whom the Saviour bled.

Let God be glorified — not only in the shedding of Christ's blood, but in the certainty of its saving application.